

and it is doubtful whether a sterilization operation would be held by the courts to come within this category—at any rate, if the particular operation was only vasectomy, and not castration. More weight, in the reviewer's opinion, attaches to the contention, also put forward by Lord Riddell, that the sterilization of a man (whether by the method of vasectomy, castration, X-rays, or otherwise) would constitute the statutory offence of "unlawful wounding," or that of inflicting "grievous bodily harm"; but on this point also there is room for doubt. However this may be, it would be very rash to assert that such operations are at present "lawful."

Lord Riddell considers that "the law regarding sterilizing operations on women is not so clear as that relating to those on men," but seems to incline to the view that the law as to "unlawful wounding" and the infliction of "grievous bodily harm" would cover sterilizing operations on either sex.

He also makes the interesting suggestion that, if a sterilizing operation is performed on a woman without her husband's consent for any reason other than the benefit of her health, the husband might maintain a civil action against both his wife and the surgeon who performed the operation, for damages for depriving him of the possibility of having offspring. As against the wife, however, it is clear that no action would lie, because actions for "tort" between husband and wife are not maintainable; but it is by no means clear that the husband could not sue the surgeon. If he could, then in the converse case the wife would presumably have a cause of action against the surgeon who sterilizes her husband without her consent.

In the last of the four papers Lord Riddell discusses the sterilization of the unfit, and comes out as a strong advocate of such a change of the law as will provide that "in suitable cases and subject to the consent of the Board of Control or some similar body:

"1. A lunatic who is of age and about to be discharged or released on parole may be sterilized with his or her consent, or, if not

of age, with the consent of his or her parents or guardians;

"2. A mental defective may be sterilized subject to his or her consent if of age and of sufficient capacity to consent; if not of age or incapable of consenting, subject to the consent of his or her parents or guardians."

The paper contains a vigorous attack on the policy of segregation as an alternative method of combating the evil of the unrestricted multiplication of the mentally unfit, and incidentally the Board of Control comes in for some criticism for the policy it advocates of increased institutional accommodation. "The Board," says Lord Riddell, "want more and more bricks and mortar, more and more doctors, and more and more attendants—in short, more and more money," and he protests against the enormous cost that this policy would entail and against "the injustice of erecting splendid new buildings to house lunatics and mental defectives when thousands of sound citizens are unable to secure decent dwellings at a moderate rent." Further, he contends that their policy affords "no safeguard against procreation."

One gathers that Lord Riddell's views on sterilization are the same as those held by most eugenists, and that he advocates it, not as a substitute for the policy of segregation, but as an adjunct to it, which will reduce its necessity and consequently its expense.

In conclusion the paper states and answers briefly some of the principal objections that have been raised to the policy of sterilization.

The book, though slight, is useful and interesting.

R. E. MOORE.

SEXUAL MORALITY

Russell, Bertrand. *Marriage and Morals.* London, 1929. Allen and Unwin. Pp. 254. Price 7s. 6d.

IN order to approach Mr. Russell's rather revolutionary book in a sympathetic spirit, it will be necessary for a good many of his

readers to purge their minds of certain ideas and beliefs which they have, by long habit, come to regard as fundamental and unchangeable; including the teachings of orthodox Christianity. To the Roman Catholic, and even to the Protestant who has real convictions, the argument of the book will appear but as an ingenious and plausible advocacy of a scheme of conduct which cannot be accepted. It follows that any consideration of the thesis, which is implicit in the whole book, must be subject to the assumption—frankly made by the author—that Christianity of the old-fashioned, dogmatic type is obsolete and no longer operative upon human conduct.

Having made this assumption, and considering the author's thesis in terms of simple ethics, of social expediency and of human happiness and welfare, we find in it nothing alarming, even if we cannot always see eye to eye with the writer. His appeal, for instance, for the lifting of the taboos on sex knowledge and the clearing away of the cloud of deception, mystery and prudery, amidst which the child is apt to gather his obscure ideas upon sex, will command the sympathy of most thoughtful persons; and particularly of those who—like the present reviewer—have had experience of teaching children biology and human physiology (without any reservations) and have noted the frank, simple interest of the wholesome childish mind in the phenomena of sexual reproduction. By many persons, too, a somewhat more qualified assent will be given to his contention (which is also that of Mr. Havelock Ellis) that the sexual relations of men and women are not matters of public concern so long as there are no children.

The advertisement on the cover, summarizing the contents of the book, presents it as a study of marriage, past, present, and future; quite correctly as to its matter. But the early chapters, dealing with the laws and usages of ancient and primitive societies controlling sex relations, are really parts of the general argument. Their purpose is to remind the reader that sex morality is not a thing of a fixed, invariable character, but is of the nature of a social adjustment to

certain environmental conditions and subject to re-adjustment as those conditions become replaced by others. The underlying purpose of the book is to plead for a reconsideration of the whole question of sex morality; for a re-adjustment of the moral code to bring it to a state of reasonable congruity with modern conditions. It is contended that the Victorian code—now only partially operative—was a survival from times when conditions were totally different, both biologically and socially, and that its taboos were based on superstitious beliefs no longer current; that modern conditions—the low death rate, the retardation of marriage, the tendency to over-population, the large excess of females over males, and the knowledge of contraceptive methods—cry aloud for new conventions; and that, finally, a change in the standard of conduct has already occurred and should, as a matter of expediency, be recognized.

On the importance of contraception as an agent of change in the moral code Mr. Russell is strongly insistent. "Contraceptives," he observes (p. 133), "have altered the whole aspect of sex and marriage, and have made distinctions necessary which could formerly have been ignored. People may come together for sex alone . . . or for companionship involving a sexual element, as in Judge Lindsey's companionate marriage, or, finally, for the purpose of rearing a family. These are all different, and no morality can be adequate to modern circumstances which confounds them in one indiscriminate total." Contraception, in fact, is the basis of the change in the conventions of conduct which Mr. Russell advocates. His position is that sexual desire is a normal physiological phenomenon like hunger and thirst; that, since it can now (by contraception) be satisfied without the danger of producing unwanted children, and since nothing stands in the way of such satisfaction but a series of artificial taboos associated with obsolete religious beliefs, it is desirable that such satisfaction should take place frankly, decently, and in association with affectionate companionship, rather than furtively, secretly and amidst gross and sordid surround-

ings. He claims that recognition by public opinion of free sexual relations between young people would tend to extinguish prostitution (which is probable enough); that the "new morality" is already in being and is an improvement on the old. "The new freedom between young people is, to my mind, wholly a matter for rejoicing. . . . Those who oppose the new freedom should face frankly the fact that they are in effect advocating the continuance of prostitution as the sole safety-valve against the pressure of an impossibly rigid code" (p. 124).

It is needless to say that Mr. Russell does not countenance mere promiscuity. He insists that the sexual relation shall be associated with genuine love; that it shall partake of the character of an informal marriage—informal as to its commencement and its termination. He favours Judge Lindsey's scheme of 'companionate marriage'; a regular union in which no children are contemplated and which is determinable by mutual consent, provided that no children have been born and the wife is not pregnant.

On the subject of marriage proper, i.e. marriage contracted with a view to the establishment of a family, Mr. Russell is rather more orthodox; indeed, up to a certain point, he is in essential agreement with the Victorian moralists. The interests of the children are the paramount consideration, to which those of the parents must be subordinated; and, since stability of the marriage is a condition essential to the welfare of the children, divorce is to be avoided if possible. Complete, fruitful marriage should be characterized by real love, affection, and mutual sympathy; "there must be the most complete physical and mental intimacy; and there must be a certain similarity in regard to standards of values." For the sake of the children, a pleasant atmosphere must be created in the house and a high standard of conduct set by the practice of mutual kindness, courtesy, and forbearance.

All of this is excellent; not even the most rigid adherent to "the old morality" could cavil. But at this point Mr. Russell proceeds to give us a rather severe shock. "I

think that where a marriage is fruitful . . . the expectation ought to be that it will be lifelong, but not that it will exclude other sex relations" (p. 114). And elsewhere he expounds the same view; that the harmony of married life ought not to be disturbed by occasional amours on the part of either the husband or the wife. "If marriage is to achieve its possibilities, husbands and wives must learn to understand that whatever the law may say, in their private lives they must be free" (p. 115).

Here we are unable to follow Mr. Russell. It seems as though he were misreading the emotional possibilities of ordinary men and women. Having agreed to jettison the religious taboos, and having swallowed the 'companionate marriage' and even the companionate un-marriage, we still find it impossible to believe that the ideal conjugal love which is postulated could survive the effects of "extra-marital sexual relations." Nor is it easy to imagine what temptation there could be for happily-married persons to stray away in search of pastures new. But Mr. Russell is prepared, in the interests of eugenics, to go even farther. "It may become quite easily possible for women in the future . . . to select the fathers of their children by eugenic considerations, while allowing their private feelings free sway as regards ordinary sexual companionship" (p. 211). This seems quite a cosy arrangement, though one notes that polyandry would not materially help the two million "arithmetically celibate" women about whom the author is so much concerned. But perhaps we may assume that the multiple husbands would be provided for on a correspondingly liberal scale; a consideration that leaves the gasping Victorian undecided whether to lament that he was born too soon or to render thanks to his obsolete deity for a merciful deliverance.

In this notice we have concerned ourselves chiefly with what we conceive to be the author's main thesis, to the exclusion of the anthropological matter, the chapter on eugenics—quite sound, apart from one or two temperamental touches—and the inte-

resting, if rather depressing, chapter on the future of the family under fully developed collectivism. The present and the immediate future are of most importance to us as directly affecting our lives. Changes in the conventions of sex are obviously taking place and require to be considered with an open mind and as sympathetically as possible. If a "new morality" is really coming into being, and if it is irreconcilable with orthodox religion, it should at least be made to conform to responsible public opinion and, if necessary, regularized by suitable changes in the law. But the danger of moral chaos must not be lost sight of. Even the most ardent reformer would not wish to see the Victorian code of sexual conduct replaced by that of the monkey-house.

R. AUSTIN FREEMAN.

Hamilton, G. V. *A Research in Marriage*. New York, 1929. Boni. Pp. 570. Price \$10.00.

Calverton, V. F., and Schmalhausen, S.D. (Editors). *Sex in Civilization*. London, 1929. Allen & Unwin. Pp. 719. Price £1.

68.18 per cent. of the business men investigated by Dr. Hamilton found a fair to high degree of satisfaction in marriage. The reader will be staggered at Dr. Hamilton's industry in investigating the conjugal felicity of *thousands* of business men. But no; it is simply a whim of Dr. Hamilton's to calculate all percentages to two places of decimals. The actual number of business men studied was twenty-two! The gentlemen of leisure afford the best example of Dr. Hamilton's whim. 100.00 per cent. of them were satisfied with marriage—but there was only one!

This indicates what must be the main criticism of the book. The significance of a great part of it, particularly of the tables supposed to show correlations, is questionable. The author fills pages with excuse for the small number of men and women investigated, and for the fact that they are not a random sample of any part of the American population. *Qui s'excuse, s'accuse*; and

the accusation is just. Here and there the meaning is obscure. Let the reader read this through once and say what it means: "My own enthusiastic conviction that Freud's insights correspond, in the main, to the realities of human psycho-dynamics, and that but for him we should still be floundering in the futilities of pre-dynamic psychiatry, makes it easy for me to understand the psycho-analysts' impatience with the proponents of less obsolete methods of research than those to which we are indebted for immeasurably the best guides to therapeutic endeavour that we have ever had." Again, why does Dr. Hamilton always write "factual" when we have an excellent English word "actual"?

When this has been said, there remains only the very highest praise for the book as a whole. Dr. Hamilton is a psycho-analyst, and psycho-analysts are not, as a rule, very objective in their attempts to attain truth. Dr. Hamilton's method is wholly objective. A hundred married men and a hundred married women, mostly well-to-do people, volunteered to reveal their inmost secrets to him in the interests of the advancement of knowledge, and everyone who reads the book will be indebted to them. Each person was asked about 350 questions, and it is obvious that the great majority gave their answers with extreme candour. The greater part of the book is taken up with tabular presentation of their answers.

Though we may pay scant attention to the percentages carried to two places of decimals, yet certain things stand out clearly. Each person was asked whether he or she would press a button, if on so doing they would find that they had never been married to their spouses. Considerably more than half of them answered "No" without qualification. Evidently marriage is not such an unsuccessful custom as many people imagine, although a quarter of the men and a quarter of the women had committed adultery. Women are shown to be less satisfied with marriage than men, though only one of the hundred women was actually sexually frigid. Only half the women had an orgasm fairly regularly at coition. A